

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03 TRSE-00 XMB-02

OPIC-03 CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 IO-13 STR-04

CEA-01 INT-05 /118 W

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FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6868

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY

AMCONSUL HONG KONG PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 1954

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAID, LA, JA, ECON, EIND, EMIN, SW

SUBJECT: JAPANESE INTERESTS IN LAOS

HONG KONG FOR CODEL MANSFIELD

1. JAPANESE GOVERNMENT OBJECTIVES IN LAOS ARE ALMOST SOLELY
POLITICAL, TO MAINTAIN NORMAL RELATIONS AND BALANCE INFLUENCE
OF COMMUNIST BLOC COUNTRIES, RATHER THAN ECONOMIC ONES OF
EXPORTING GOODS TO LAOS OR OBTAINING RAW MATERIALS FROM IT.
JAPANESE EMBASSY SECOND SECRETARY, YUKIYA AMANO, TOLD EMBASSY
OFFICER THAT HIS GOVERNMENT HAD ABANDONED SERIOUS CONSIDERATION
OF LAOS AS A SIGNIFICANT SOURCE OF RAW MATERIALS WHEN THE
RESULTS OF A SURVEY PLACED THE COST OF EXPLOITING IRON ORE
OVER ONE BILLION DOLLARS. THE PROJECT, WHICH
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INCLUDED CONSTRUCTING A RAILROAD, WAS CONSIDERED MUCH TOO

COSTLY IN ECONOMIC TERMS AND RISKY ON POLITICAL GROUNDS. THE JAPANESE ALSO BELIEVE THAT THE LAO POPULATION OF ABOUT THREE MILLION, 90 PERCENT OF WHOM ARE SUBSISTENCE FARMERS WILL CONTINUE TO BE AN INSIGNIFICANT MARKET FOR JAPANESE MANUFACTURED GOODS.

2. AMANO SAID THAT THE JAPANESE ARE UNCONCERNED WHEN ATTACKED IN THE LAO PRESS BY STRIDENT ANTI-JAPANESE PROPAGANDA, WHICH THEY DISMISS, FOR THE MOST PART, AS MEANINGLESS RHETORIC. AMANO NOTED THAT LPDR ATTACKS ON THE USG AS WELL AS JAPAN SEEM TO COME IN WAVES PROMPTED BY WHIM, NOT EVENTS. HE NOTED THAT THE LAO CONTINUE TO ASK JAPAN FOR AID EVEN WHILE THEY KEEP UP THEIR PROAGANDA ATTACKS.

3. ACCORDING TO MANO, JAPANESE AID TO LAOS FOR 1977 WILL BE \$3 MILLION DOLLARS. THE JAPANESE DESIGN IS TO CONTINUE AID AT ABOUT THE SAME LEVEL AS IN PREVIOUS YEARS IN ORDER TO INDICATE THE JAPANESE DESIRE FOR CONTINUED NORMAL RELATIONS. ILLUSTRATING HIS POINT, AMANO NOTED THAT SWEDISH AID TO LAOS IN 1977 WILL INCREASE TO 30 MILLION KRONA FROM 20 MILLION IN 1976. THE LAO KNOW, HOWEVER, THAT SWEDISH AID AND INTEREST IN LAOS ARE TRANSITORY. AMANO BELIEVES THAT THE LAO ALSO KNOW THAT THE JAPANESE, AS ASIANS, WILL HAVE A MORE ENDURING INTEREST IN LAOS. AMANO STRESSED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT CONSIDERS IT IMPORTANT THAT LAOS REMAIN OPEN TO THE FREE WORLD.
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